

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 03725 161358Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

ACDA-07 ERDA-05 OMB-01 EUR-12 EB-08 COME-00 /094 W

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1910

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MDRAS

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 3725

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, IN

SUBJ: FOREIGN POLICY NOT A CAMPAIGN ISSUE

REF: A. DELHI 3594, B. DELHI 3581, C. DELHI 3234

1. NEITHER THE UNITED STATES NOR FOREIGN RELATIONS IN GENERAL HAS BEEN AN ISSUE IN THE INDIAN ELECTION CAMPAIGN. THERE HAVE BEEN A FEW ALLEGATIONS OF OPPOSITION PARTY LINKS TO THE US, AND THE OPPOSITION INTURN HAS ATTEMPTED TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF SEVERAL INDO-US BUSINESS DEALS, BUT THESE HAVE BEEN MINOR AND ISOLATED INSTANCES AND HAVE NOT COLORED THE CAMPAIGN.

2. IN HER FEW REFERENCES TO FOREIGN POLICY DURING THE CAMPAIGN, MRS GANDHI HAS LIMITED HERSELF MOSTLY TO GENERAL STATEMENTS, SAYING THAT INDIA WANTED TO BE FRIENDLY WITH ALL COUNTRIES PARTICULARLY ITS NEIGHBORS. SHE HAS SAID ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS THAT THE EMERGENCY ENHANCED THE

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PAGE 02 NEW DE 03725 161358Z

COUNTRY'S PRESTIGE ABROAD AND EVEN THOSE COUNTRIES, SOMETIMES IDENTIFIED AS WESTERN EUROPEAN, WHO WERE CRITICAL OF ITS IMPOSITION HAVE ADMITTED THE GAINS MADE UNDER THE EMERGENCY. ON ONE OCCASION, IN EXTOLLING THE INDIAN

NUCLEAR EXPLOSION, SHE COMPLAINED THAT SOME COUNTRIES DID NOT WANT TO SEE INDIA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM TO DEVELOP.

(REF A). HARKING BACK TO BURDEN THAT THE BANGLADESH WAR PLACED ON INDIA IN 1971 MRS GANDHI LAST WEEKEND REPORTEDLY SAID THAT NO FOREIGN POWER HAD COME TO INDIA'S HELP THEN AND THAT, ON THE CONTRARY, SHE WAS WARNED OF THE CONSEQUENCES. AS NOTED IN REFTTEL B, IN NORTHERN INDIA MRS GANDHI THIS PAST WEEKEND CONTINUED HER AMBIVALENT REMARKS ON PAKISTAN, WELCOMING THE EXAMPLE OF A STRONG CENTRAL GOVERNMENT BEING RETURNED WHILE AT THE SAME TIME SUGGESTING VIGILANCE BECAUSE OF PAKISTANI PAST REFERENCES TO A "THOUSAND-YEAR WAR".

3. THE ONLY DIRECT ALLEGATIONS ABOUT THE UNITED STATES BY CONGRESS PARTY CANDIDATES AND THEIR ALLIES THAT WE ARE AWARE OF OCCURRED IN WEST BENGAL AND TAMIL NADU. ACCORDING TO A CPI PUBLICATION, LEFT-WING CONGRESS CANDIDATE P.R. DAS MUNSHI SAID IN EARLY MARCH IN ONE CAMPAIGN SPEECH IN CALCUTTA THAT THE FIGHT WAS NOT BETWEEN CONGRESS AND THE JANATA PARTY BUT A FIGHT OF THE DEMOCRATIC FORCES AGAINST THE HEINOUS CONSPIRACY OF AMERICAN IMPERIALISM. HIS REMARKS WERE REPORTEDLY SECONDED BY WEST BENGAL MINISTER OF STATE FOR INFORMATION SUBRATA MUKHERJEE. ON MARCH 11, MUKHERJEE ALSO TOLD AN ELECTION MEETING THAT INDIA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS AND NATIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM WOULD CRUMBLE IF THE JANATA CAME TO POWER. HE SAID THAT IT WOULD BE BAD FOR INDIA IF, AS MORARJI DESAI HAD SAID, THE SOVIET UNION DECIDED TO OPT OUT OF THE INDO-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP TREATY BECAUSE THE JANATA CAME TO POWER. WEST BENGAL FOOD MINISTER P.K. GHOSH ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID ON AN EARLIER OCCASION THAT THE JANATA PARTY SOUGHT ALLIANCE WITH THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 NEW DE 03725 161358Z

USA. IN TAMIL NADU, SEVERAL LEFTIST TAMIL LANGUAGE PUBLICATIONS ATTEMPTED TO LINK THE DMK WITH THE UNITED STATES. ACCORDING TO ONE OF THESE PUBLICATIONS, THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE BREAKAWAY AIADMK ALLEGED THAT THERE WERE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE DMK AND THE CIA.

4. JANATA PARTY HAS RAISED SEVERAL BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS WITH AMERICAN FIRMS IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE EFFORTS TO TAR SANJAY GANDHI. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMI CLAIMED IN ONE SPEECH THAT AMERICAN OFFICIALS HAD GIVEN THE INDIAN AMBASSADOR A LIST OF 18 INDIAN CONSULTANTS WHO ALLEGEDLY HAD RECEIVED PAYMENTS FROM BOEING, INCLUDING A "PROMINENT MEMBER OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S FAMILY". SEVERAL NEWS-PAPERS SYMPATHETIC TO THE OPPOSITION HAVE COMPLAINED OF THE SALE TO A GOI AGENCY OF TRUCKS MANUFACTURED BY AMERICAN COMPANIES THROUGH THE AGENCY OF SANJAY GANDHI'S FIRM MARUTI. JANATA PARTY HAS ALSO ASKED THAT DETAILS BE MADE PUBLIC ON THE ALLEGED PURCHASE OF PIPER AIRCRAFT, FOR WHICH MARUTI IS ALSO AN AGENT, BY STATE GOVERNMENTS AND

INDUSTRIAL HOUSES. THESE COMPLAINTS WERE NOT PURSUED BY THE OPPOSITION'S LEADING CAMPAIGNERS AND HAVE NOT FIGURED IN THE RHETORIC OF THE CLOSING DAYS OF THE CAMPAIGN. IN SIMILAR FASHION, THE JANATA PARTY APPEARS TO HAVE DROPPED AS AN ISSUE THE ALLEGED ESPIONAGE CASE (REFTEL C).

5. THE SOVIET UNION HAS BEEN RAISED AS AN ISSUE ONLY IN SEVERAL OF JANATA LEADER MORARJI DESAI'S PRESS CONFERENCES. ASKED EARLY IN THE CAMPAIGN IF HE WOULD ABROGATE THE INDO-SOVIET TREATY, DESAI REPORTEDLY SAID THAT IN THE EVENT JANATA WON THE SOVIETS WOULD PROBABLY WANT TO LET THE TREATY LAPSE. ACCORDING TO SAMACHAR, DESAI ON MARCH 15 FURTHER SAID THAT THE JANATA PARTY WOULD NO DISOWN THE INDO-SOVIET TREATY BUT THAT HE WAS PERSONALLY OPPOSED TO IT BECAUSE ENTERING INTO A TREATY WITH A MEMBER OF THE EASTERN BLOCK WAS CONTRARY TO THE POLICY OF NON-ALIGNMENT: HE SAID IT WOULD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 NEW DE 03725 161358Z

HAVE BEEN "ALL RIGHT" HAD INDIA ALSO ENTERED INTO A SIMILAR TREATY WITH A WESTERN NATION.

6. OUR VIEW OF THE PERIPHERAL NATURE OF FOREIGN POLICY IN THE CAMPAIGN IS SHARED BY FOREIGN SECRETARY JAGAT MEHTA WHO TOLD THE CHARGE EARLY LAST WEEK THAT HE WAS PLEASED THAT FOREIGN RELATIONS HAD NOT FIGURED IN THE CAMPAIGN, PARTICULARLY SINCE IN HIS VIEW THE GREATEST GAINS OF THE EMERGENCY HAD BEEN IN INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY. SCHNEIDER

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